

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 155883

TOPOL 16

FOLLOWING REPEAT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO AMMAN BEIRUT
CARIO GENEVE JIDDA LONDON PARIS TEL AVIV USUN NEW YORK OF
17 JUL 74:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11072

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF

SUBJ: SOVIET ARABISTS' VIEWS ON ME

1. SUMMARY. SOVIET MIDDLE EAST SPECIALISTS, IN
CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY, STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF
GENEVA MEPC BUT ARE NOT PERTURBED ABOUT ITS NOT BEING
CONVENED UNTIL SEPTEMBER AT EARLIEST. SOME PIQUE
CONTINUES TO BE DISPLAYED ABOUT SOVIETS' SIDELINE
ROLE IN DISENGAGEMENT. SOVIETS DISCOUNT EARLY RE-
SUMPTION OF SOVIET-ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.
THEY CLAIM ARAFAT VISIT TO MOSCOW THIS SUMMER WILL
BE UNOFFICIAL AND THAT NO OFFICIAL PLO REPRESENTATION
WILL BE ESTABLISHED HERE. THEY TAKE COOL AND RELAXED
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VIEW OF SOVIET-INITIATED POSTPONEMENT OF FAHMY VISIT,

SAYING THEY HAVE NOTHING TO DISCUSS WITH HIM UNTIL AFTER THE ARAB SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER. END SUMMARY.

2. AT JULY 12 RECEPTION FOR VISITING U.S. DELEGATION, LEADING SOVIET ARABIST IGOR BELYAYEV OFFERED EMBOFFS HIS VIEWS ON PRESNET ME SITUATION AND U.S.- SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. ALSO PRESENT WAS USA INSTITUTE ME SPECIALIST K. KISLOV. AT EGYPTIAN SOCIAL FUNCTION SAME EVENING, DEPUTY CHIEF MFA NEAR EAST DIVISION PYRLIN ALSO COMMENTED ON ME QUESTIONS.

3. PROSPECTS FOR ME SETTLEMENT. BELYAYEV - A FORMER PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT IN CAIRO AND A FREQUENT PRESS COMMENTATOR ON ME -- TOOK A POSITIVE BUT LONG-TERM VIEW OF THE GENERAL OUTLOOK FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. HE THOUGHT DISENGAGEMENT REPRESENTED SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WHICH HE WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT POSSIBLE LAST FALL. BUT DISENGAGEMENT WAS ONLY A FIRST STEP. NEGOTIATING A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WILL BE DIFFICULT AND WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME, POSSIBLY THREE TO FIVE YEARS. THE IMPORTANT THING NOW, HOWEVER, IS TO GET GENEVA GOING AND BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF THE ELEMENTS OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

4. U.S. ME ROLE. BELYAYEV EXHIBITED CONCERN AND SOME BITTERNESS ABOUT U.S. SOLO SUCCESSES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PARTICULARLY THE SECRETARY'S "PERSONAL ACTIVITY." HE SAID THERE WAS A FEELING THE SECRETARY WAS SAYING ONE THING BUT DOING ANOTHER. THIS PERSONAL APPROACH WAS "RISKY," AND U.S. SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT GROMYKO'S VISITS TO SYRIA HAD BEEN IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT. (COMMENT: IN INTERESTING CONTRAST, USA INSTITUTE ME EXPERT K. KISLOV SAID IN SAME CONVERSATION THAT SECRETARY'S ROLE HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND NECESSARY FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DISENGAGEMENT.) FOR THE FUTURE BELYAYEV THOUGHT SOVIET-U.S. COOPERATION WOULD BE ESSENTIAL.

5. GENEVA CONFERENCE. BELYAYEV INDICATED SOVIETS
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ARE IN NO HURRY TO RECONVENE GENEVA. PYRLIN, IN PRESENCE OF EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS, SAID IT WOULD MEET ONLY AFTER THE ARAB SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER, A CONCLUSION SHARED BY BELYAYEV. BELYAYEV SHOWED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN HOW THE US WOULD APPROACH THE MEPC. HE SEEMED TO ACCEPT AS REALISTIC EMBOFF'S VIEW THAT A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH WOULD BE ONLY ARRANGEMENT WITH CHANCE FOR SUCCESS.

6. SOVIET-ISRAELI RELATIONS. BELYAYEV SAW LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT MOSCOW WOULD RESUME RELATIONS SOON. HE APPEARED TO RULE OUT RESUMPTION BEFORE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE RECONVENED. HE THOUGHT, NEVERTHELESS, THE BREZHNEV JUNE 14 STATEMENT REGARDING THE USSR'S INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH ALL STATES IN THE ME WAS AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT. BREZHNEV'S WORDS MEANT THE USSR WANTED BETTER RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. HOWEVER, THE TIMING OF ANY RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WOULD DEPEND ON PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE.

7. PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. BELYAYEV SAID PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WAS STILL EXTREMELY COMPLEX. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THE PALESTINIANS WERE BECOMING MORE REALISTIC. THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS HAD STRENGTHENED ARAFAT'S POSITION. BOTH BELYAYEV AND PYRLIN CONFIRMED THAT ARAFAT WOULD GO TO GENEVA. BUT PYRLIN EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD BE ABLE TO AGREE ON A COMMON LINE. ARAFAT WOULD BE VISITING MOSCOW IN THE SUMMER TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS (UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AFRTO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE AS BEFORE, ACCORDING TO PYRLIN). PYRLIN ASSERTED THERE IS NO SOVIET INTENTION TO PERMIT A PERMANENT PLO OFFICE TO OPEN IN MOSCOW.

8. BELYAYEV SHOWED PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE WEST BANK PALESTINIANS. HE ASKED EMBOFFS' VIEWS ON POSSIBLE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND WEST BANK, SPECIFICALLY WONDERING WHETHER SOME KIND OF DEFERATION MIGHT EMERGE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANT ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND ISRAEL. BELYAYEV SAID A MAJOR UNKNOWN IN THIS WHOLE MATTER

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IS THE INTERESTS AND VIES OF THE WEST BANK PALESTINIANS. HE THOUGHT ISRAEL WAS IN A POSITION TO "CONTROL" THIS FACTOR, AND HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT.

9. SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. BELYAYEV SEEMED UN- CONCERNED AT SOVIET-INSPIRED POSTPONEMENT OF THE FAHMY VISIT. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FAHMY WOULD COME LATER, PROBABLY IN OCTOBER. THIS TIMING WOULD MAKE SENSE. THE ARAB SUMMIT WOULD BE OVER, AND ARAB POSITIONS WOULD BE CLEARER. A VISIT AT THIS TIME (JULY), BELYAYEV THOUGHT, WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL BECAUSE "WE HAVE NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT NOW." BELYAYEV WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE EGYPTIAN VISIT WOULD OCCUR BEFORE THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. (EGYPTIAN EMBOFF TELLS US THAT HIS

SIDE HAS NOT ACCEPTED OCTOBER VISIT, BUT HAS ASKED
SOVIETS TO EXPLAIN RATIONALE FOR POSTPONEMENT AND WHY
EARLY OCTOBER WOULD BE BETTER.)
STONESSEL UNQUOTE
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